

Message Text

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12

ACTION EUR-12

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R 100746Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6507

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USINT BAGHDAD BY POUCH

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SUBJECT: SWEDISH TRADE MINISTER TO VISIT CUBA, NIGERIA, AND IRAQ

REF: 75 STOCKHOLM A-303 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY AND COMMENT. NEWLY APPOINTED SWEDISH TRADE MINISTER CARL LIDBOM WILL LEAD TRADE DELEGATIONS TO CUBA IN FEBRUARY, NIGERIA IN MARCH AND IRAQ IN APRIL. GOVERNMENT SOURCES STRESS THAT INTENTION IS TO DEVELOP NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR SWEDISH EXPORTERS IN FACE OF WEAKENED DEMAND IN TRADITIONAL MARKETS AND STATE THAT VISITS HAVE BEEN PLANNED SINCE LAST FALL. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT CHOICE OF COUNTRIES TO BE VISITED HAS POLITICAL ELEMENT AS WELL. DELEGATION TO CUBA FOLLOWS UPON PRIME MINISTER PALME'S ENTHUSIASTIC VISIT THERE LAST JUNE, AND, WITH BOTH CUBA AND NIGERIA, SWEDEN SHARES PARTISAN SYMPATHY FOR POPULAR MOVEMENT FOR LIBERATION OF ANGOLA (MPLA). FURTHERMORE LIDBOM'S VISIT TO IRAQ SHOULD BE NOTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH RECENT GOS VOTE IN UN SC

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SUPPORTING PLO PARTICIPATION IN MIDDLE EAST DEBATE.

END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

1. TRADE MINISTER CARL LIDBOM WILL LEAD TRADE DELEGATIONS TO CUBA IN FEBRUARY, NIGERIA IN MARCH, AND IRAQ IN APRIL, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS CONFIRMED BY BERTIL SWARD, SENIOR OFFICIAL IN TRADE MINISTRY, AND ERIK BRAUNERHIELM, TRADE POLICY DIRECTOR FOR PRIVATE SWEDISH FEDERATION OF INDUSTRIES (SFI). TRIPS WERE AGREED UPON SOME TIME BEFORE LIDBOM SUCCEEDED FORMER MINISTER KJELL-OLOF FELDT LAST NOVEMBER. MISSIONS WILL BE FOLLOWED BY SELLING ACTIVITIES. THEY ARE TO BE SEEN AS PART OF SWEDISH EFFORT TO OPEN NEW MARKETS FOR EXPORT INDUSTRIES TO COMPENSATE FOR DECLINE OF ITS TRADITIONAL MARKETS DURING CURRENT INTERNATIONAL RECESSION, BOTH SWARD AND BRAUNERHIELM MAINTAINED.

2. BRAUNERHIELM SAID CUBA HAD INSISTED UPON TOP-LEVEL DELEGATION HEADED BY CABINET MINISTER, CLAIMING CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH SWEDEN. GOS WAS RESPONSIVE, EVEN PROMISING TO GRANT SUBSTANTIAL EXPORT CREDIT GUARANTEES. (SWEDISH COMPANIES HAVE NOT BEEN KEEN ON SELLING TO CUBA BECAUSE OF ITS DEMANDS FOR LONG-TERM CREDITS.) NOW THAT CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN ANGOLA HAVE COME INTO THE NEWS, AXEL IVEROTH, SFI MANAGING DIRECTOR, IS PRIVATELY SEEKING ADVICE ABOUT DESIRABILITY FOR SWEDISH BUSINESSMEN TO GO WITH A CABINET MINISTER TO CUBA AT THIS TIME. BRAUNERHIELM BELIEVED SWEDISH GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE NO SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT PROCEEDING, BUT THOUGHT BUSINESSMEN MIGHT BE UNCOMFORTABLE. IT MAY, HOWEVER, BE TOO LATE TO CHANGE ARRANGEMENTS.

3. BRAUNERHIELM DID NOT BELIEVE THAT ANY BARGAINING WOULD TAKE PLACE WITH REGARD TO PURCHASES OF OIL FROM IRAQ AND NIGERIA. HE THOUGHT IT LIKELY THAT AN OFFICIAL FROM INDUSTRY MINISTRY MIGHT GO ALONG TO LOOK INTO OIL SUPPLY POSSIBILITIES IN THOSE COUNTRIES AND THAT SEPARATE OIL MISSION MIGHT EVOLVE IF SITUATION WERE PROMISING.

4. HE ADDED THAT TRIPS MARK FIRST INSTANCE OF CABINET MINISTER LEADING TRADE DELEGATIONS, USUALLY HEADED IN PAST BY PRINCE BERTIL. BECAUSE OF ITS LARGE FOREIGN DEFICIT AND NEED FOR SWEDEN TO BOOST ITS EXPORTS, GOVERNMENT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY POSITIVE OVER LAST YEAR IN ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD HELPING SWEDISH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMPANIES DO BUSINESS ABROAD. SEMI-GOVERNMENTAL EXPORT COUNCIL IS NOW TAKING OVER ORGANIZATION OF TRADE DELEGATIONS, INCLUDING THESE THREE, FROM SFI AT LATTER'S URGING. SFI HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO ENCOURAGE GREATER GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT IN TRADE PROMOTION.

5. SWARD SAID VISITS WILL NOT RESULT IN BILATERAL ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS WITH CUBA AND NIGERIA OR IN REVIVAL OF INACTIVE 1962 ECONOMIC AGREEMENT WITH IRAQ. SWEDEN, HAVING ENTERED INTO

A SERIES OF SUCH AGREEMENTS, ESPECIALLY WITH OIL-PRODUCING
COUNTRIES SINCE 1973, HAS COME TO REGARD THEM AS OF LIMITED
ECONOMIC VALUE. (REFAIR).
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